REMARKS BY GEORGIA TECH PRESIDENT G. WAYNE CLOUGH
Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning
Teaching Fellows Luncheon, March 20, 2001

Even though I've moved out of the classroom into administration, I am still a teacher at heart, and I always look forward to this annual celebration to spend a little time focusing on teaching.

I'm only going to speak for a few minutes this morning, and then we are going to talk about what you want to talk about. Many of you have been e-mailing questions for me to CETL. I haven't seen any of them, but I'm going to do my best to answer them on the spot. And if you didn't have time to send your question by e-mail, we'll try to give you a chance to ask it here.

But before we get started on the questions, I want to commend you for your desire to improve your own teaching, and thank you for the contribution you make to Georgia Tech's reputation for excellence in the classroom.

Today we are honoring 16 of you who have been Teaching Fellows during the current academic year. This is the 10th anniversary of the Teaching Fellows program, and the 16 Fellows from this academic year pushed the total number of program participants over the 200 mark. We are also welcoming 13 more who will become Teaching Fellows next fall semester. For you, the brunch provides just a glimpse of the wonderful experience you have ahead of you.

In 1999 Georgia Tech received the Theodore M. Hesburgh Award for Faculty Development to Enhance Undergraduate Teaching and Learning. It is the nation's top award for undergraduate teaching, and Georgia Tech was only the third research university to receive it.

In particular, the Hesburgh Award honored the Teaching Fellows programs, and the special support these programs have gotten from alumni. And I want to acknowledge and thank George Stewart and John Carter, who are here from the class of 1969 which endowed the Teaching Fellows.

At many research universities the lab is emphasized over the classroom, and undergraduates see research as diverting the attention of faculty away from them. In addition, technophiles are often stereotyped as lacking interpersonal skills. As a result, some people are surprised to learn that Georgia Tech aspires to great teaching.

But I believe research and undergraduate education are interrelated activities that can and ought to enrich each other. Our goal is to give students the best of both worlds – the attention to undergraduate education of a liberal arts college and the opportunity for exposure to a world-class research enterprise.

We want our faculty to engage in break-through research, but we also encourage them to teach, injecting the exciting dimension of leading-edge research into the classroom. And we give undergraduates opportunities for hands-on involvement in our research labs. We want to be a community of scholars, all engaged in the discovery of knowledge at some place on the

continuum and all involved together in education, in research, and in reaching out beyond our campus.

I want to thank our Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies Bob McMath as well as our recent Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Mike Thomas, who is moving on to new responsibilities, for their attention to improving undergraduate education.

Beyond the Teaching Fellows, CETL is also expanding its efforts to train teaching assistants. Ten web-based training modules for TAs are being designed this year. They will be tested over the summer, then become available for use next year.

These modules can be incorporated into existing TA programs. They can be used as the core around which new TA programs can be built by academic units that don't have them. And they can be used on an individual basis by both undergraduate and graduate TAs who want to improve their skills.

The modules cover topics like the honor code, grading policies, students with disabilities, student athletes, gender equity, diversity, and how to get students to interact in class. TAs who complete them will receive a certificate.

CETL also received one of 20 National Science Foundation grants in the nation to implement a program that puts graduate students in engineering, science, and computer science into high school math and science classes. The $1.5 million grant will put a dozen Georgia Tech graduate students into high schools each year for the next three years.

High school seniors are not much different from college freshmen. This age group is the most difficult to teach of any level in college, and it is also where most aspiring college faculty have to cut their teaching teeth. So it is helpful to graduate students who aspire to become professors to have a chance to watch high school teachers in action and be mentored by them. And in turn, the high school teachers appreciate the help they get from these highly knowledgeable assistants.

These are just some of the many ways that CETL promotes outstanding teaching on the Georgia Tech campus, and I'm glad to have this opportunity to thank and recognize Donna Llewellyn and her staff for their efforts.

As all of us know, real teachers do not teach subjects. They teach students. Even though we have a focus on technology, even though we are tremendous research engine, Georgia Tech still excels at its original mission – to educate "a hell of an engineer." And your initiative and efforts to improve your teaching skills help to make education at Georgia Tech more alive, more interactive, and more intriguing.

Now, let's get started on your questions.